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GROWTH OF EDUCATION IN ODISHA DURING THE BRITISH PERIOD

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Introduction: In Odisha the traditional education system was prevailed in the ancient and medieval period. But the modern education was started during the British period which led to the collapse of the traditional education system in Odisha. Under the East India Company, Christian missionaries made the beginning of modern education in Odisha by printing the Old and New Testaments in Odia. The first primary school was created in 1822 by missionaries. One of the long-term impacts of the British rule in Odisha was the introduction of English education in the land.[1] This attempt of the British put Odisha on the path of modernization through the growth of education in Odisha

Education in Odisha during Pre-British Period: Prior to 1803 (the year British occupied Odisha) education was controlled by the private initiative.[2] The schools *(Pathasala)* ran in temples, Sanskrit *Tols* , Bhagavat Tungis and in the house of some rich men. The *Avadhanas* (teachers) put emphasis on reading, writing and working out simple mathematics or traditional knowledge. The Odia literature was taught to the pupils including the *Bhagavata* of Jagannatha Das and puranas etc. There was no Odia school managed by the Kings of Odisha by that time. Thus, education in the Pre-British period was quite annoying in Odisha.[3]

Factors responsible for the spread of English Education: The factors for the growth of English education were many. In the beginning, the East India Company was much apathetic to the growth of English education in Odisha. In course of time, they realized that if the people will not be well acquainted with English, their administration and the entire system will not work properly.[4] So they took interest for the growth of English education in Odisha. On the other

hand, Charles Grant, the member of the British Parliament and Lord Minto, the Governor-General took keen interest for the spread of English education among the Indians who will understand the British administration and will help the officials in discharging their duties.[5] The Christian missionaries in the spirit of evangelizism wanted to uplift the Odishan people through the spread of education. The main aim of these missionaries was to preach the natives the words of Jesus Christ. The missionaries prepared the Odia letters and printed the first Odia Bible in 1804. The New Testament was translated in 1809 by Pandit Mrutyunjay Vidyalankar. This translation was possible due to the efforts of three missionaries namely Me.Carry, Marshman and Ward. [6] The British thought that the appointment of the Odias in the Govemment service would be beneficial to them because they would get very less salary in comparison to others. Lastly, the need of educated elites to help the British administration was a need of the time. It was true for all the provinces of India and Odisha was not exclusion to it.

Macauley's Minutes and education in Odisha: It was Lord Macauley, the President of the General Committee of Public instruction and Law Member of the Governor-General's Council who prepared his Minute in 1835.[7] After much debate between the Anglicists and the Orientalists over the issue of medium of instruction, English was accepted the medium of instruction to impart European knowledge to the people of India. As a result the British took steps to open English Schools in Odisha. Before that the Christian missionaries had established English medium schools. The missionaries had opened a few schools and they had proved successful. The mission school in northern Orissa was opened on 1st June 1822. And after that the government took over the responsibility of fifteen native schools.[8] In 1836, the British opened the first English School at Puri. Although the Cuttack English School was established in 1823-24 by the Christian missionaries, its management was transferred to the Government in 1836. That is why Cuttack Missionary School became popular and Puri English School was closed after two years of its inception. In 1853 Government founded an English School at Balasore and restored the Puri School. Subsequently, Zilla Schools were established at Balasore, Puri and Cuttack to create a class of English educated people to help in the work of the British Government in Odisha.[9]

Growth of education under Wood’s Despatch: The Wood's Despatch was another milestone in the history of educational progress in the state of Odisha. In 1854 during the Governor-Generalship of Lord William Bentinck Sir Charles Wood, the President of the Board of Control

drafted a scheme which became famous as Wood's Despatch. It became the 'Magnacarta' in the history of English system of education in India. It recommended for the opening of new schools and for retain old schools. Accordingly, another Zilla School was established at Berhampur in 1855. This despatch dated 19'" July 1854 was to analyse the history and progress of education in the region. I It offered a number of valuable suggestions and after that there were a number of changes, which brought the condition of education in this region to a higher position.[10] In 1858-59, there were 30 schools, in 1868 the number was 63 and it rose to 95 in 1870. The period following Wood's despatch, schools started functioning in the remote areas of the province. A school had come at Kendrapara with 35 students; there was a school at Puri with students. Similarly, schools had sprung at Bhadrak, Balasore, Mahanga, Hariharpur and other places. One obstacle in the educational system was the fee structure of the schools. Even there were cases of students dropping out of schools due to the high fee structure. [11]

Spread of Vernacular Education: Due to the Wood's Despatch, the Zilla School at Sambalpur assumed the status of the Anglo-Vernacular School. The policy of placing Middle English School in a vernacular basis helped the Odias for the spread of English Education. On the other hand, T. E. Ravenshaw looked after the 832 Pathasalas or indigenous village schools. Thus it galvanized the process of the growth of primary education in Odisha. Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati of Paralakhemundi gave impetus for the spread of Primary education in Odisha. By 1947 the number of primary schools increased to 6998 in Odisha.[12]

Secondary Education: Besides primary education, the secondary education also received a fresh impetus by the Wood's Despatch. The Middle Vernacular Schools, Middle English Schools and the High Schools were established for the growth of education in Odisha. In the Middle Vernacular School, English was not a compulsory subject. The Middle Vernacular Schools added two years of education after upper primary stage. In the Middle English School, English was a compulsory subject in the curriculum. M.E. School also had four years of courses of study. High Schools also provided four years of courses of study after the M.E. School. Accordingly, private High Schools were established at Cuttack. The Pyari Mohan Academy which began as a ME School in 1875 assumed the status of a High School in 1879. The Victoria School at Cuttack also assumed the status of a High School in 1888. By the end of Nineteenth century there were 12 High Schools and 82 M.E. Schools in North Odisha and 4 High Schools and 26 ME Schools in South Odisha.[13]

Lord Ripon and the Hunter Commission: Lord Ripon, the Viceroy of India, appointed a commission under W.W. Hunter which famous as Hunter Commission in 1882.[14] According to its recommendations, private schools and colleges were opened in different towns of Odisha. [15] In the full spirit for amalgamation of Odia speaking tracts, Pandit Gopabandhu Das established Satyavadi Bakula Vanvidyalaya at Sakshigopal in 1909. The *Panchasakhas* of modern Odisha like Pandit Gopabandhu Das, Acharya Harihara, Pandit Nilakantha Das, Pandit Godavarish Mishra and Pandit Krupasindhu Mishra took over the charge of this school for the growth of education in Odisha. The creation of Odisha as a separate province created an urge in the mind of the leaders of Odisha for spreading edutati6n in Odisha. By 1947 there were 42 High Schools and 61 M.E. Schools existed in odisha.[16]

Growth of higher education: After the end of the disastrous Famine of 1866, the British Government thought for giving attention for the development of higher education in Odisha. The establishment of Ravenshaw College in 1868 began a new epoch in the field of higher education in Odisha, In 1968, the Cuttack Zilla School was converted into Collegiate School with the opening of FA (First Arts) class only having facility for teaching of Intermediate standard. After that by the recommendation of T.E. Ravenshaw, it was converted to a Degree College. In 1878 Maharaja Krushna Chandra Bhanja donated 20,000 rupees for the construction of a new college building. Till 1878, Ravenshaw College was the only college in Odisha which was giving higher education. The Berhampur Zilla School was converted into a collegiate School with the addition of FA classes in 1878. By the recommendation of Hunter Commission, privatization was encouraged and that school became Berhampur Native College and in 1893 it became Khallikote College when Raja Harihar Mardaraj Dev granted land for it. In 1896 another college was established at Parlakhernundi by Maharaja Gourachandra Dev: It was a Junior (Second Grade) college till 1936. In 1937 it was upgraded. S.B. Women's College was also established at Cuttack. There were only seven reputed colleges in Odisha- Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, Khalikote College, Berhampur; S.K.C.G. College, Parlakhemundi, S.B. Women's College, Cuttack; G.M. College, Sambalpur and S.C.S. College, Puri and F.M. College, Balasore. Besides the above colleges, one Training College had been established at Cuttack which latter on became famous as Radha Nath Training College. All these colleges were established in Odisha during the British period for providing higher education in the state. [17]

Technical Education in Odisha during the British period: The technical education was also provided by the British in course of time in order to full fill the need of the British Government. In 1923, the Odisha School of Engineering was opened at Cuttack which at present known as the Bhubanananda Engineering School. On the other hand, the Boys' Industrial School at Balasore was started in Balasore by the American Baptist Mission and education was imparted in carpentry, book-binding, cane work, painting, cement work etc. Two weaving institutes were opened at Sambalpur and Cuttack districts.[18] The Odisha Medical School was established in 1876 which worked with galvanizing effect from 1917 which is recognized as the S.C.B. Medical College and Hospital. The Sanskrit *tols* (schools) offered *Prathama* and *Madhyama* studies. Some special schools were established. 35 special schools for Scheduled castes and 19 schools for Scheduled tribes were established at Angul and Sambalpur in 1917. After that a training college to impart the process of teaching was established at Cuttack, which later on became Radha Nath Training College.[19]

Approach of British Government towards Education in Odisha: Although, the British had initiated the modern education in Odisha. But it did not progress fast. There are Several reasons for the above approach of the British towards the education in Odisha.(1) the British was quite apathetic towards the spread of higher education in Odisha. (2) although it wanted that the people of Odisha should learn English, but it never wanted to make them highly educated. It simply wanted a working knowledge of English only to create a clerical class of people as it wanted in case of India also.(3) higher education was very expensive. The British Government never wanted to spend more on education which will benefit the native people. In 1858, when the Bombay, Madras and Calcutta Universities were established, there was not a single college by that time in Odisha. (4) the number of schools and colleges was quite insufficient in Odisha. So the rise of elite class became delayed in case of Odisha. (5) the conservative ideas regarding education of the people of Odisha was exploited by the British, So, they did not encourage the English education in Odisha. Lastly, the British did not encourage the Engineering education particularly related to agriculture although Odisha was a land having agriculture as the chief profession of the people.[20] These were factors which also hindered in the growth of education in Odisha.

Conclusion: Thus, the modern education in the form of English education in Odisha started during the British period. The beginning in this regard was made by the Missionaries for the evangelical purpose. In course of time, the British government took the initiative for the introduction of modern education in the form of English education in Odisha for their administrative convenience and to keep the people of Odisha silent by giving small employments and other facilities. However, the growth of education was not as progressive as it has been seen in case of other parts of India. With the end of the British rule in India, English education grew in Odisha.

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